

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 176735

LIMDIS, USOECD, EXCON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: ESTC, COCOM

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT OF COCOM CHAIRMAN

REF: A) PARIS 20504; B) STATE 158080

1. IN RESPONSE TO ITALIAN EMBASSY'S REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION OF THE USG POSITION ON AN ITALIAN CANDIDATE TO REPLACE PRESENT COCOM CHAIRMAN INDELICATO, DEPARTMENT OFFICER JULY 11 MADE FOLLOWING POINTS TO COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR JACOBUCCI:

-- WE HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY IMPRESSED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ITALIAN CHAIRMEN OF THE COMMITTEE. THEY HAVE BEEN BOTH IMPARTIAL AND CAPABLE.

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-- THE COMMITTEE ITSELF MUST, OF COURSE, MAKE THE DECISION ON WHO IS TO REPLACE CHAIRMAN INDELICATO AND WHEN. THE PREFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS THAT INDELICATO REMAIN UNTIL COMPLETION OF THE LIST REVIEW. THIS WAS NO REFLECTION ON REITANO'S CAPABILITIES OR QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE POSITION. (FYI. THE LIST REVIEW SHOULD END IN LATE SPRING, 1979. END FYI). WE UNDERSTAND INFORMALLY

THAT THIS PREFERENCE IS SHARED BY A NUMBER OF COCOM-MEMBER NATIONS.

-- WE GATHER THAT THE COMMITTEE HAS NOT YET BEEN FORMALLY APPRISED OF MR. INDELICATO'S PROPOSED TRANSFER. ONCE THIS IS DONE, ADDITIONAL CANDIDATES FOR THE CHAIRMAN'S POSITION MAY BE OFFERED. WE WOULD BE OBLIGED TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER NOMINATIONS ON THEIR MERITS, ALTHOUGH WE CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT TO AVOID A DIVISIVE DISPUTE OVER THE CHAIRMANSHIP.

-- IN REACHING OUR DECISION ON A POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTE FOR MR. INDELICATO, WE WOULD OF COURSE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAKE IT DESIRABLE TO HAVE AN ITALIAN CHAIRMAN AND THE RECORD OF THE ITALIAN CHAIRMEN FROM THE INCEPTION OF THE COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CANDIDATE.

2. JACOBUCCI WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT WE WERE NOT MORE SUPPORTIVE OF THE ITALIAN CANDIDACY AND INDICATED THAT THERE WERE STRONG ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS FOR THE TRANSFER AT THE PRESENT TIME.

3. FOR ROME: EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO MAKE OUR CONCERNS FORMALLY KNOWN AT APPROPRIATE HIGHER LEVELS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DRAWING ON MATERIAL IN PARA 1 ABOVE.

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4. FOR USDEL: US DEL IS REQUESTED TO APPROACH LIKE-MINDED DELS (REF A); NOTE OUR CONTINUED PREFERENCE THAT INDELICATO BE RETAINED; ADVISE THEM OF OUR APPROACH IN ROME; AND ASCERTAIN WHETHER THEY ARE CONSIDERING A SIMILAR APPROACH TO ITALIAN AUTHORITIES.

5. FYI. AT LAST REPLACEMENT OF COCOM CHAIRMAN, BELGIANS PRESENTED CANDIDATE BUT WITHDREW WITHOUT STRONGLY CONTESTING THE MATTER. AT THAT TIME, BELGIANS COMPLAINED THAT THE PROCEDURES NEEDED CHANGING; THAT VACANCIES SHOULD BE ANNOUNCED IN ADVANCE SO THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT CANDIDATES; AND THAT BELGIUM SERIOUSLY INTENDED TO PRESENT A CANDIDATE NEXT TIME. (SEE 73 USOECD 10811) THESE DON'T STRIKE US AS UNREASONABLE REQUESTS. CHRISTOPHER

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